

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

DECISION RECORD
Snowy Wolf Timber Sale
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-03-15

Background:

An Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Snowy Wolf Timber Sale have been prepared by the Upper Willamette Resource Area, Eugene District Office. Timber harvest, road construction, road improvement and road decommissioning would occur on Matrix lands as identified in the Northwest Forest Plan. Density management would occur on Riparian Reserves to acquire desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain Aquatic Conservation Objectives. The Snowy Wolf Timber Sale is located in Sections 23 and 25 of T. 20 S., R. 1W., Will. Mer.

The purpose of the action in the Matrix is to provide a sustainable supply of timber and thin stands to promote production of merchantable timber and maintain forest health and productivity. The purpose of this action in Riparian Reserves is to speed the development of late-successional forest structural conditions and to manage roads to reduce sedimentation and road-related runoff and restore flow regimes.

Consultation:

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was accomplished in the "*Programmatic Biological Assessment for Projects with the Potential to Modify the Habitats of Northern Spotted Owls and/or Bald Eagles or Modify the Critical Habitat of the Northern Spotted Owl - Willamette Province FY 2003-2004*" and will conform to the guidance in this document. Based on this document, the project is determined to be a "no effect" action for bald eagles and a "likely to adversely affect" action for spotted owls. There will be "no effect" to spotted owl critical habitat.

Consultation with NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) on fisheries for effects to listed fish species was completed in February 7, 2004. The project was determined to be "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" action upon species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Public Comment:

Prior to preparation of the EA, a summary of the proposed action was sent to those receiving the "Eugene BLM Planning and Project Focus," December 2002 (approximately 250 mailings; a complete listing is available at the Eugene District Office). Maps of the proposed action were sent to the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde and Confederated Tribes of Siletz. No comments were received.

The EA and unsigned FONSI were advertised on September 3, 2003 in the Eugene Register Guard. The EA and unsigned FONSI were also available on the internet at <http://www.edo.or.blm.gov/nepa>. Copies of the EA and unsigned FONSI were also mailed to interested individuals (see EA, p. 17). The public comment period ended on October 3, 2003. No comments were received.

Finding of No Significant Impact:

On the basis of the information contained in the Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-03-15), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the proposed action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts not already addressed in the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994) and the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (June 1995), as amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, January 2001, with which this EA is in conformance, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Decision:

Based on site-specific analysis in the Environmental Assessment, the supporting record, management recommendations contained in the Lost Creek Watershed Analysis, as well as management direction contained in the Eugene District Resource Management Plan, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative 4) as analyzed in the Snowy Wolf Timber Harvest Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-02-24). This Alternative will thin an estimated 151 acres in the Matrix land use allocation, density management on approximately 55 acres in Riparian Reserves, construct approximately 1.15 miles of gravel-surfaced road, temporarily improve 0.53 miles of existing road (to be decommissioned after completion of harvest), and decommission or block an estimated 1.54 miles of existing road. An estimated 4 million board feet (MMBF) of timber will be harvested. The mitigation measures, design features and management requirements, logging methods, and road decommissioning goals as described in the EA, are hereby adopted

Rationale for the Decision:

The Proposed Action (Alternative 4) best meets the purpose and need as described in the EA, because it will:

1. Contribute to meeting the need for a sustainable supply of timber by making approximately 4 MMBF of timber available for harvest.
2. Reduce stocking, increase vigor, increase growth rates, and capture mortality on an estimated 151 acres in the Matrix.
3. Assist in the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives by conducting density management on an estimated 55 acres in the Riparian Reserves, decommissioning or blocking approximately 1.54 miles of road, and installing needed culverts. The Proposed Action will speed the development of late-successional forest structural characteristics in Riparian Reserves more than any other alternative (EA, p. 13), which is needed to restore habitat to support well-distributed populations of native plant, invertebrate, and vertebrate riparian-dependent species (ACS objective #9) and to provide habitat for Special Status Species, SEIS special attention, and other terrestrial species (RMP, p. 23). The Proposed Action will not prevent or retard attainment of any ACS objectives. As noted in the EA, the Proposed Action will maintain current stream temperatures (EA, p. 16); will result in a long-term reduction of road-related sediment delivery to streams (as would all action alternatives, EA, pp. 15-17); and will avoid direct disturbance of riparian coarse woody debris and mitigate any minor, indirect effects (EA, pp. 16-17). Otherwise, the Proposed Action will not affect attainment of any other ACS objectives, as described in the EA (pp. 2-3). Therefore, the Proposed Action is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

The "No Action" alternative was not selected, because it would provide no timber, would not maintain forest health and productivity, would not speed the development of late-successional forest structural conditions in Riparian Reserves, and would risk not maintaining the sediment regime in some streams in the project area (EA, pp.13-14).

Alternative 2 was not selected, because it would not speed development of late-successional forest structural conditions in Riparian Reserves (EA, p. 13), and would cause greater disturbance to nesting northern spotted owls than the other alternatives (EA, pp. 10-11).

Alternative 3 was not selected, because it would not speed late-successional forest structural conditions in Riparian Reserves as fast as Alternative 4 (EA, p. 13).

Administrative Remedies:

The decision to implement this timber sale project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 – Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on July 28, 2004. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of this timber sale project (43 CFR 5003.2b). Protests of this timber sale decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of the notice of sale.

Approved by: Emily Rice
Field Manager, Upper Willamette Resource Area

Date: 7/27/04